THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. Army has been experiencing shortage of officers in the lower ranks.

(b) and (c) Though the written tests conducted by the UPSC, for induction of officers in Army are conducted in English only, fluency in English language is not compulsory for Service Selection Board tests and interviews. The candidates are at liberty to write and speak cither in Hindi or in English.

Compulsory Military Service for Able-bodied Citizens

2455. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ever considered introducing Compulsory Military Service for its able-bodied citizens as in Western/European countries;

(b) whether such a move will enable the citizens to develop team-spirit and sense of patriotism; and

(c) whether such a force can also assist the civil authorities in times of exigencies and calamities, sparing the regular defence personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Docs not arise in view of (a) above.

Officials of defence Ministry Booked by CBI for Supply of Sub-Standard Ammunitions

2456. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that one retired Lieutenant General and two senior officials of the defence Ministry had been booked by CBI for supply of substandard ammunitions to Indian Army, causing a loss of Rs. 19,30,09,464/-; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A contract dated 21st January, 1993 was signed with Ms Pitcare Ltd Hong Kong for supply of 10,000 rounds of 130mm illuminating ammunition and 6,700 rounds of 122 mm illuminating ammunition at a cost of 6.118 million US Dollar. The ammunition was not found fit for use after check proof was conducted and efforts to settle the quality claim and recover the amount from the vendor did not succeed. The subject transaction was adversely commented by the C and AG who *inter alia* recommended that the matter should be investigated through an independent agency. Accordingly the matter was referred to CBI for investigation.

After conducting a preliminary inquiry, the CBI has registered a regular case for investigation against certain officials including a retired Lieutenant General and other companies and individuals in Hong Kong and Singapore. An FIR has been filed against the accused officials under the relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

Discussison on Defence Deals with U.S. secretary of Defence

2457. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether defence deals were discussed with U.S. secretary of defence during his recent visit to India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) During the recent visit of U.S. Secretary of defence to India, the defence cooperation relationship between the two countries was discussed. No particular defence deal was discussed.